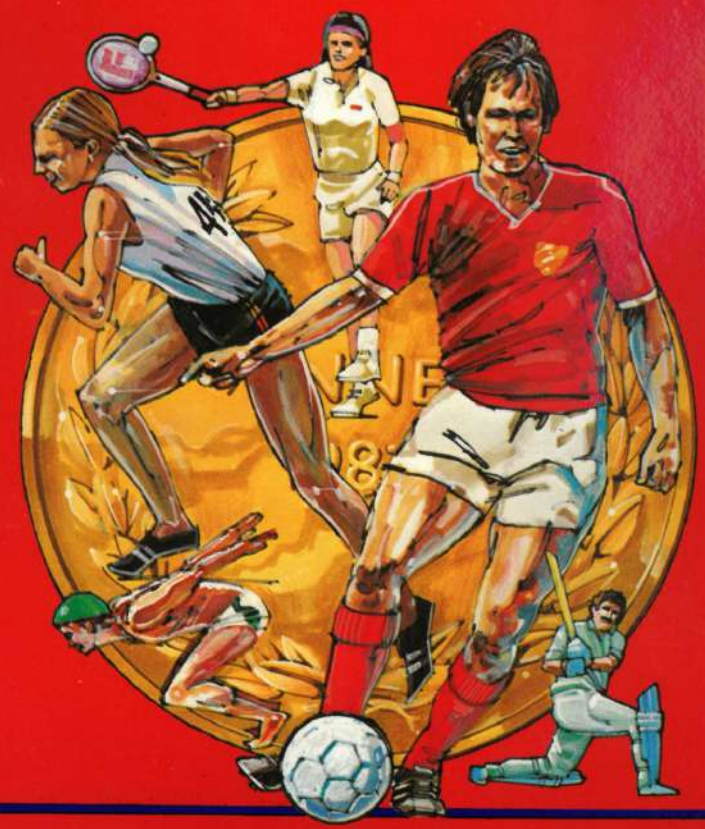
KP

hula hoops

Sporting Medals



INTRODUCTION

Every sportsman dreams of the day he will mount the winner's rostrum and receive a medal. There is a very special thrill in that achievement which makes all the many hours of training worthwhile.

Very few of us are fortunate enough to experience that feeling but, with the collection of replica winners medals from KP Hula Hoops (and just a touch of imagination) you may be able to get some idea of what it feels like. Hopefully it will encourage you to put in the necessary practice and become a champion in your chosen sport.

Obviously the medals in this collection are only replicas – the only way to get a real winner's medal is to go out and win the tournament in which they are awarded! That's what makes them so special. Nevertheless, I've been fascinated to see what an F.A. Cup winners medal looks like, for instance, and if I were a footballer I'm sure that seeing a replica like the one in this collection would make me all the more determined to go out and win one for myself.

Whatever your sport, I wish you every success and I hope that you'll be a medal winner one day. Even if you don't win one of the medals in this collection, the feeling will be just as strong.

Mike Hazelwood
KP Masters Waterski Champion 1982

BADMINTON

The All England Championship is probably the premier tournament in Badminton. Winning a medal here is the dream of badminton players all over the world.

Recent singles champions have been as follows:-

	Men	Ladies
1978	Liem Swie King (Indonesia)	Mrs. G.M. Gilks (GB)
1979	Liem Swie King (Indonesia)	Miss L. Koppen (Denmark)
1980	P. Padukone (India)	Miss L. Koppen (Denmark)
1981	Liem Swie King (Indonesia)	Miss S.A. Hwang (Korea)
1982	M. Frost (Denmark)	Miss Z. Ailing (P.R. of China)
1983	Luan Jin (P.R. of China)	Miss Z. Ailing (P.R. of China)

SQUASH

Your winner's medal shows the emblem of the Squash Rackets Association, the organisers of the British Open Championship.

The Championship was once regarded as the unofficial world title. There is now an official World Squash Championship but the British Open remains one of the premier tournaments in the world.

S.R.A. British Open Championship

Winners

1977-78	Geoff Hunt (Australia)	1980-81	Geoff Hunt (Australia)
1978-79	Geoff Hunt (Australia)	1981-82	Jahangir Khan (Pakistan)
1979-80	Geoff Hunt (Australia)		

SHOW JUMPING

Your replica medal is copied from the individual silver medal won by Malcolm Pyrah in the 1982 World Championships. This contest is often thought to be the most searching competition of all for a rider and the medal is a just reward for Malcolm Pyrah's hard work and devotion to his sport.

Recent World Championship winners are shown below:-

World Championship 1978.

1st Gerd Wiltfang (W. Germany)
2nd Eddie Macken (Ireland)
3rd Michael Matz (USA)

World Championship 1982.

1st Norbert Koof (W. Germany)
2nd Malcolm Pyrah (GB)
3rd Michel Robert (France)

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BADMINTON

All England Badminton Championships

SQUASH

British Open Squash Championships

SHOW JUMPING

World Show Jumping Championships

CRICKET

The premier limited over tournament in Britain is the annual National Westminster Bank Trophy, often referred to simply as 'The Nat West.' The competition (formerly known as the Gillette Cup) has been sponsored by the National Westminster Bank since 1981. It is now run on a knock-out basis between the 17 first-class county sides and the 13 leading minor county sides in addition to Scotland and Ireland. The final is held at Lord's each September and attracts massive support.

National Westminster Bank Trophy Winners.

1981 Derbyshire
1982 Surrey
1983 _____

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

The FA Challenge Cup is one of the oldest and most coveted of all football trophies. The cup itself is returned by the winners each year but every player in the winning team receives a medal as a memento to their success.

Your Hula Hoops medal is a replica of that FA cup winners' medal.

Football Association Challenge Cup Winners.

1978	Ipswich Town	1981	Tottenham Hotspur
1979	Arsenal	1982	Tottenham Hotspur
1980	West Ham United	1983	___

SWIMMING

Swimming forms part of the Olympic, European and Commonwealth Games but it also has its own championships at every level up to the World Championship.

In Britain, the sport is controlled by the Amateur Swimming Association whose symbol is shown on your winner's medal. They also operate an awards scheme whereby you can win bronze, silver or gold badges for various levels of swimming achievements.

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CRICKET
National Westminster Bank Trophy

FOOTBALL
FA Challenge Cup

SWIMMING
ASA Championships

RUGBY UNION

The home of Rugby Football is at Twickenham in Middlesex where it has been based since 1877 and where all of England's home international matches are played. A special medal was struck to commemorate the centenary of the English Rugby Union in 1970-71 and your medal is a replica of the original gold ones showing an aerial view of the Twickenham ground.

Twickenham is one of the grounds at which the Five Nations Championship Games are played. Recent winners of this tournament have been:–

Five Nations Champions

1979	Wales	'Grand Slam	1982	Ireland	'Grand Slam'
1980	England	'Grand Slam	1983	Ireland/France (Joint Winners)	
1981	France				

TENNIS

The Carnation Wightman Cup is the major team tennis tournament for British women players. It is competed for annually between the USA and Britain.

Your medal features the famous Wightman Cup, named after Mrs. George Wightman, 4 times US champion.

Winners

1978	Great Britain	1981	USA
1979	USA	1982	USA
1980	USA	1983	——

ATHLETICS

The AAA Championship is the major national event in the British athlete's calendar. Your medal is a replica of those which are awarded at the championships.

The AAA Championships have been the scene of some outstanding performances including those listed below:–

AAA Championships Best Performances

	Event	Holder	Date
Men	800 metres	A. Carter (1 min. 45.12 secs)	1973
	1500 metres	S. Cram (3 min. 36.14 secs)	1982
	Decathlon	D. Thompson (7684 points)	1976
Women	100 metres	Andrea Lynch (11.22 secs)	1976
	200 metres	Sonia Lanaman (23.6 secs)	1977
	400 metres	Joslyn Hoyte-Smith (51.7 secs)	1981

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AAA Championships B[illegible]

	Event		Date
Men	800 metres	[illegible] secs)	1973
	1500 metres	[illegible]4 secs	1982
	Decathlon	[illegible]4 points)	1976
Women	100 metres	Andr[illegible]n (11.[illegible]2 secs)	1976
	200 metres	Sonia Lanaman (23.6 secs)	1977
	400 metres	Joslyn Hoyte-Smith (51.7 secs)	1981

RUGBY

Rugby Football Union Centenary Medal

TENNIS

The Wightman Cup

ATHLETICS

AAA Championships

BASKETBALL

For British basketball players being a member of the team which wins the Division 1 league championship is the highest possible achievement. It represents the reward for a whole season of hard work and devotion to the game.

National Basketball League – Division 1 Winners

1977-78	Cinzano (Sutton + Crystal Palace)
1978-79	Team Ziebart (Doncaster)
1979-80	Crystal Palace
1980-81	Team Fiat
1981-82	Crystal Palace

TABLE TENNIS

The Norwich Union English Open Championship is the premier tournament in the English table tennis calendar. Medals are awarded for men's and women's singles and doubles, and also for the team championships.

Hula Hoops Winners

	Men's Singles	Women's Singles
1977-78	Li Chen-Shih (China)	Chu Hsiang Yun (China)
1978-79	Kuo Yao-Hua (China)	Mrs. J.P. Hammersley (England)
1979-80	D. Douglas (England)	Mrs. J.P. Hammersley (England)
1981-82	Teng Yi (China)	Chen Lili (China)

WATERSKIING

The KP Masters Championship is the first big international tournament in Britain each year. Top waterskiers from all over the world are invited to Thorpe Park in Surrey where they compete in each of the three disciplines – slalom, tricks and jumping. Holding a KP Masters Winners Medal like the replica in this collection is a prize which comes only to the best waterskiers in the world.

KP Masters Championship Winners.

	Ladies.	Men
1979	Marion Van Dyke (Holland)	Mike Hazelwood (GB)
1980	Philippa Roberts (GB)	Mike Hazelwood (GB)
1981	Judy McClintock (Canada)	Mike Hazelwood (GB)
1982	Karin Roberge (USA)	Mike Hazelwood (GB)

BASKETBALL

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National Basketball	Winners
1977-78	Cin… (…al Palace)
1978-79	Team… (…ster)
1979-80	Crystal Palace
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TABLE TENNIS

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BASKETBALL

National Basketball League Championship

TABLE TENNIS

Norwich Union English Open Championship

WATERSKIING

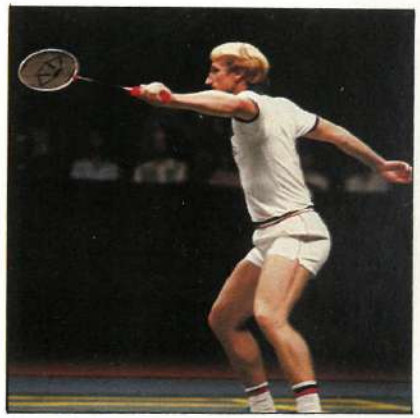
KP Masters Waterskiing Championships

BADMINTON

Badminton is now an indoor sport played to international championship rules but it is believed to have derived from an outdoor children's game called 'battledore and shuttlecock'. The game is named after the village of Badminton in Gloucestershire where it originated.

It was rapidly adopted by army officers who took the game to India and started the spread of the sport overseas.

The game can be played by both men and women and in doubles by mixed pairs as well as those of the same sex. It is like a racket and ball game in the way it is played but in this game it is a shuttle which is hit by the racket. Whether made with the traditional feathers or with modern nylon, these shuttles are extremely light and their speed is greatly affected by the atmosphere. This enables players to use a wide variety of shots and gives the game its distinctive character.



Mike Tredgett

The sport is now played all over the world and international matches are regular events. It is included in the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games but the most prestigious tournament of all is still probably the John Player All-England Championships.

This tournament has been contested since 1899 and has come to be regarded as the 'Wimbledon' of Badminton. Since 1938 competitors from outside the British Isles have been taking part and, in recent years, the winners of the singles events have come from countries as diverse as Denmark, Indonesia and China. 1982 was the first year that Chinese competitors took part in the championships. They immediately made their impact felt with the Ladies singles title being taken by Miss Ailing.

Gillian Gilks

British interest in the tournament was centred largely on the performance of Gillian Gilks. For the last 10 years she has been among the world's best players having won the Ladies singles title in 1978, the Ladies Doubles title in 1974, 1976 and 1980 and the Mixed Doubles title in 1973, 1976, 1977 and 1982. A truly amazing record!

SQUASH

No one really knows how 'Squash' or more precisely 'Squash Rackets' first started but it is generally believed that it originated at Harrow School in the mid 19th century. Boys waiting to play on the Rackets courts would warm-up in the courtyard outside by hitting a 'ball' against the walls. A 'squashy' ball was used to avoid breaking the windows – hence the name 'Squash Rackets'.

Since those days squash has far outstripped its parent game Rackets. There are now only approximately 20 Rackets courts remaining in the country, mainly at Public schools, while there are over 8,000 squash courts including club, school and public courts. It is frequently quoted as one of the fastest growing sports in the UK.

Squash became popular with the British Forces in the late 19th century and the army built a number of courts in India and in Egypt during their occupation of those countries leading to the international development of the game. The Royal Air Force also helped to popularise the game before the Second World War when all their stations were provided with a court. However, it was not until the 1960's that the game's boom in popularity started in earnest.

The modern game is not that different from those early days. It is played in a rectangular space reminiscent of that Harrow courtyard. Rackets are used to hit a small 'Squashy' ball out of reach of an opponent. Nowadays of course, the dimensions of the court, the rackets and the size and 'bounce' of the ball are standardised. Also the tactics and fitness of the players have become much more highly developed. Nevertheless, it remains essentially the same game.

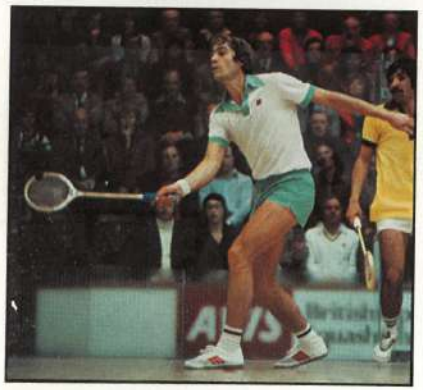
To some extent, this increase in popularity in the UK is due to the attention brought to the game by the British squash player, Jonah Barrington. In 1966, he became only the second player ever to hold the Amateur and the Open Championship titles in the same year.

The British Open Championship is the most prestigious of all current tournaments other than the World Open. Players from all over the world are invited to battle for the title.

In 1981 Geoff Hunt (Australia) won his eighth British Open Championship and thus broke the record held by Hashim Khan (Pakistan) who won seven times between 1950 and 1957.

Younger players like Jahangir Khan (Pakistan) who won the British title in 1982 at the age of only 18 are expected to dominate squash for several years to come. The game has also been taken up by many more schools bringing more young people into the game and ensuring a more competitive junior championship.

Women's squash started later and was slower to catch on, but nowadays the game is played by thousands of women; the progress of a Guernsey girl, Lisa Opie, to the final of the 1982 British Open Championship was followed by many thousands more on television.



Geoff Hunt

SHOW JUMPING

Show Jumping is the most spectacular of equestrian events. It is in this sport that the skill of the rider and the ability of the horse are most obviously tested.

There are, in fact, 3 different types of show jumping contest. All of them test jumping ability but some, the 'puissance' events, test this alone whereas others use time as a deciding factor between horses which have shown similar jumping results; in the last case, failure to jump a fence results in time penalties in a competition judged primarily by how quickly the course is completed.

Most of the major competitions are of the second type and courses are set which test the ability of the horse to jump every type of obstacle, such as the walls, plank-hurdles, spreads, parallel-poles, etc. which simulate the different types of jump found in nature.

'Faults' are awarded if a fence is knocked down, if the horse refuses to jump a fence, if the rider (or the horse) falls and if the time limit is exceeded.

The courses are set in such a way as to put a premium on the rider's ability to 'read' the course and guide the horse to approach each jump correctly while making the best possible speed. In the final of

Malcolm Pyrah on Law Court

Malcolm Pyrah on Towerlands Chainbridge

the men's world championships, the four qualifiers each ride not only their own horse round the course but also that of each of the other competitors. This makes the contest a particularly searching test of the rider's skill and eliminates much of the advantage which can come from riding a particularly good 'jumper'.

The development of the sport was greatly influenced by the work of the cavalry schools who used jumping courses to improve their horsemen's ability to fight on horseback, but its popularity has survived the decline in the number of cavalry officers after the second world war.

Up until that time international competitions, including the Olympic games, had been dominated by military men but civilian men and women took up the sport and it experienced a surge in popularity in the 1960's when television brought it to a whole new audience.

The sport is truly international but Britain, along with Ireland and Germany, has always been particularly well represented among the best in the world. For many years David Broome was one of the world's leading riders and Malcolm Pyrah, Harvey Smith, Liz Edgar and Caroline Bradley continue the tradition.

CRICKET

More has probably been written on the subject of Cricket than on any other English game. It has become so much a part of life in the UK that cricketing expressions crop up frequently in conversation wherever English-speaking people meet – "That just isn't Cricket," "Your question has stumped me," etc.

The game has evolved over several centuries and it has become very complicated. Those who have not become familiar with the game by growing up with it frequently find it impossible to follow.

It is an 11-a-side bat and ball game in which each player tries to score 'runs' for his side while using his bat to defend his 'wicket' of three sticks from a ball bowled at it by a player from the other side. The winning team is the one which scores the most runs in a completed match, which could last only a few hours or as much as five or six days in a Test Match (International).

Ian Botham

The game is thought to have derived from 14th century shepherds in the South East of England who would roll balls of wool at the wicket gate of a sheepfold while another would try to hit it away with his crook. Gradually players came to develop the game by using special bats (though the earliest bats were still curved like a crook) and harder balls, but probably the most significant changes did not take place until the 19th century.

Ian Botham

In 1835 the Marylebone Cricket Club drew up a set of rules to govern the game. Those rules are much the same as those which stand today but they did not allow overarm bowling. That was not introduced until 1864 when it totally transformed the game.

The principal change in cricket during that period was, however, not a change of rules but the development of batting technique brought to the game by W. G. Grace, arguably the greatest batsman ever.

The traditional first-class game lasting several days remains for the County Championship and for Test Matches but limited over cricket such as the National Westminster Bank trophy has become much more popular in recent years.

For the 'NatWest' trophy, each side is limited to one innings lasting not more than 60 overs, so that the game can be played to a result in one day. Naturally this leads to a faster tempo for the game and has aroused great enthusiasm among spectators.

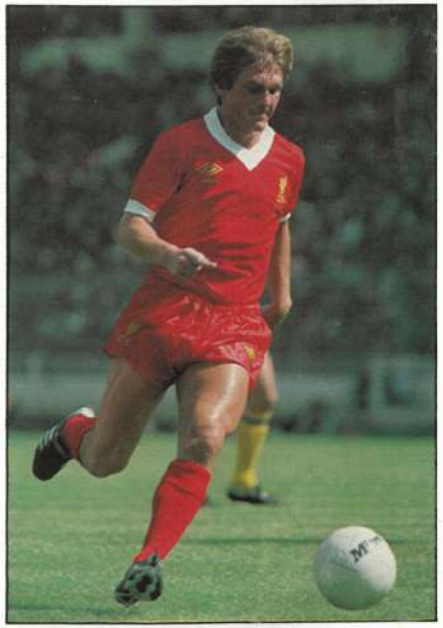
ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

The sophisticated techniques and tactics of modern football are so familiar to us from watching the game on television, that it is difficult to believe that the game was once played by 'mob' sides of up to 500 people without the benefit of a pitch or of more than the most rudimentary set of rules. The aim was to score a goal by getting the ball to an agreed point and almost any means of getting there (or of preventing the other side scoring) was permissible.

There is evidence of similar crude forms of football in China, Greece and Rome centuries before Christ but the modern game is English. The laws of the game were drawn up here in the mid-nineteenth century.

The new rules were carried throughout the world by seamen, merchants and businessmen and by the end of the last century, association football was already popular throughout Europe and South America. Since then it has spread throughout Africa and most of Asia as well as starting to become popular in the USA so that it is generally thought to be one of the world's most popular sports both for participants and spectators.

Kenny Dalglish



Kenny Dalglish

The Football Association (F.A.) Challenge Cup has been competed for since 1871. It is open to any club belonging to the Football Association to enter alongside the giants of the First and Second Divisions of the Football League. Many smaller clubs have taken up the chance for glory and this 'giant-killing' provides the FA Cup competition with some of its magic.

The FA Cup final is now always played at Wembley Stadium and has attracted capacity crowds ever since 1923 when it first moved to its new home. In that first year over 150,000 people watched Bolton Wanderers defeat West Ham 2-0. Nowadays the crowd is much smaller (approximately 110,000) but millions of people watch the game on TV.

Manchester United have won more FA cup ties than any other club since the Second World War but Aston Villa and Tottenham Hotspur have been more successful in winning finals. They have won no fewer than 7 times each.

SWIMMING

Unlike most animals, humans cannot swim naturally, they have to learn how to do it. Even so, the sport goes back to the early days of Greece and Rome. There are records of swimming races in Japan as early as 36 B.C.

Modern competitive swimming consists of four recognised styles – freestyle (or front crawl), backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Swimmers race over different distances in each of these styles and in medley races which combine all four styles in one race. Sophisticated electronic equipment is now being used to time the races but the sport is the same in essence as when the first races took place so many years ago.

The sport is not restricted to racing measured distances in a measured pool. Long distance swimmers use open water for their races and can face the additional problems of cold, rough water, tides and currents as they swim.

Other swimmers have adopted an art form of swimming, Synchronised Swimming, which is similar in some ways to ballet or gymnastics in the water. Competitors are marked for how well they perform their routine and for the difficulty involved in the movements.

For conventional swimmers, there are many levels of competition ranging from school races to the Olympic games. The premier event in Britain is the National Championships organised by the Amateur Swimming Association. Winners here often go on to compete in the European and World Championships or at the Olympic games.

Swimming is essentially a time sport. Competition often stimulates swimmers to better performance but the clock is probably the best guide to achievement.

David Wilkie

One of the extraordinary features of the sport is the way in which records continue to be improved – there seems no limit to performance.

Another feature has been the narrowing in the difference in standards between men and women brought about by modern methods of training. In 1912 Durack (Australia) set a women's 100 metres freestyle world record of 1 minute 19.8 seconds. This was 18.2 seconds slower than the men's world record.

Seventy years later Rowdy Gaines (USA) had improved the men's record to 49.36 seconds, but was only 5.43 seconds faster than Barbara Krause (G.D.R.) with a woman's world record of 54.79 seconds.

Britain has always been a strong swimming nation. In recent years swimmers such as David Wilkie, Duncan Goodhew, Margaret Kelly and Sharon Davies have all reached the very highest levels. However, no-one in the world has quite matched the achievement of Mark Spitz in winning six gold medals in the 1976 Olympics.

RUGBY UNION

England v Scotland 1983

Rugby Union is familiar to most of us from television and we have become used to the distinctive oval ball and the complex tactics, but it wasn't always like that. The game developed from football in the days when that game had no fixed numbers on each side and when there were few rules controlling the way it was played.

The origins of Rugby Union are exclusively English. It is generally believed that the game began with a boy at Rugby School in 1823, William Webb Ellis, who picked up the ball in his arms and 'ran-in' with it. This was in flagrant disregard for the rules of football (such as they were) but came to characterise the Rugby version of the game.

It spread rapidly among the schools and colleges and by 1870 Scottish Rugby Players were challenging England to an international match. This had a great deal to do with the setting up of the Rugby Football Union in the following year to control the game and to set out a proper set of rules.

Despite its pure English heritage, the game has spread to many other countries and international matches with teams from countries as widespread as New Zealand, Argentina and South Africa have become regular events.

Probably the premier international tournament for followers of Rugby Union is the annual 'Five Nations' championship contested between England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and France. Any team which wins all four of its matches is accredited with the coveted 'Grand Slam'. Only slightly less prestigious for the four home countries is the 'Triple Crown' which is achieved by beating the other 3, whether or not they also beat France. England and Wales have each won 8 'Grand Slams' but Wales have the slight advantage of having won 16 'Triple Crowns' to England's 15.

The highest award that a player can win is to be picked for his country or for the Home Countries touring side, known as the 'British Lions'. Each time he is selected for a full international match he is awarded a cap. The most capped players are J.P.R. Williams (Wales) 55 caps and C.M.H. Gibson (Ireland) with a record of 69 caps.

The popularity of the game among younger people is now being given a further boost by the development of 9-a side 'Mini-Rugby' specifically for boys under 13.

England v Scotland 1983

TENNIS

'Real' or 'Royal' tennis from which lawn tennis developed was an aristocratic sport favoured by both French and British Kings such as Henry VIII. Its popularity was limited by the requirement for a special indoor court.

No such restrictions applied to lawn tennis and it burst suddenly into popularity during the latter half of the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). Some of the first courts were hour-glass shaped but by the time that the first Wimbledon tournament was played in 1877 the shape of the court and the rules for the game were already much the same as they are today.

One feature which helped the popularity of the game was the fact that, unlike Real Tennis, it could be played by women. Ever since the earliest days the game has been played by women both against each other and against men.

Chris Lloyd

Up until the 1920's the game remained an entirely amateur sport but its attraction as a spectator sport soon led to the emergence of professional players. For a long time the major tournaments such as Wimbledon were barred to those professional players but the demands of the game at the highest level were so great that very few amateurs could devote the

Chris Lloyd

training time necessary to compete with the professionals. Nowadays, top flight players can earn very large sums of money from the game.

Tennis is popular all over the world and there are several tournaments which attract the very best competitors. Foremost among these is Wimbledon – one of the oldest and most prestigious of all the tournaments.

Tennis is also played by international teams. There is particularly fierce rivalry between Britain and the USA. The Davis Cup for men's lawn tennis is now competed for by several major tennis nations but for over sixty years the competition was restricted to the USA and Britain.

The Wightman Cup for women's lawn tennis is still restricted to a contest between the USA and Britain. It was inaugurated in 1923 and named after Mrs. George Wightman, a great match tennis player who was US champion 4 times. The tournament is the major team event for British women players and is featured on your medal.

ATHLETICS

Steve Ovett

There can be no older sport than athletics. Men have probably always competed with each other to find out who can run fastest, jump highest, throw furthest and so on; and this competition is the basis of modern athletics. There are records of races being run in Ancient Greece over 3,000 years ago but there is no record of any organised competition in Britain before 1849, other than irregular events such as the Highland Games and professional races run for the benefit of those betting on the result.

Some of the throwing events, such as javelin and discus, have an obvious military background. Greek and Roman soldiers must have competed in these events to compare their skills and prowess. Most of the running and jumping events, however, appear to have developed simply from the love of competition.

In its most basic form, athletics requires no equipment and is probably the most widely spread participant sport in the world. Many world class long distance runners began their careers in Africa without having seen a proper running track or pair of spikes. In Britain, almost all schools have access to a running track and facilities for field events such as high jump and long jump. Facilities for the throwing events, pole vault and triple jump are a little rarer but most school children are given the opportunity to try their skill at the whole range of athletic events.

British athletes, both men and women, have been successful at the highest level in many events but, during recent years, the middle distance runners have been particularly good. Sebastian Coe, Steve Ovett and Steve Cram have all proved outstanding in 800 and 1500 metres races and have seldom been beaten. They are all expected to do well in the 1984 Olympics.

Many think that the Decathlon, combining the skills of sprinting, hurdling and middle distance running with high and long jumping, pole vault, shot, discus and javelin, represents the best all-round test of athleticism. Another Briton, Daley Thompson, is the current world record holder in this event and a great hope for the gold medal in Los Angeles in 1984.

The interests of athletes at all levels in England and Wales are looked after by the Amateur Athletic Association. Each year they organise the Robinsons Barley Water AAA Championships which has proved itself a testing ground for Britain's top athletes.

Invitations are also issued to some foreign athletes whose peformances further increase the standard of competition in each event.

Steve Ovett, Steve Cram, Sebastian Coe

BASKETBALL

Until comparatively recently Basketball was little known in this country but the combined effects of schools competitions, visits of teams such as the Harlem Globetrotters and, particularly, the game being featured on Channel 4 television, have led to a massive increase in the number of people playing (and watching) the game.

Basketball is strictly American in its origin. It was invented by a Canadian, Doctor Naismith, who wanted to create a sport which rewarded skill and avoided physical contact. The first game was played in Massachusetts in 1892 with goals made from two peach baskets nailed to convenient balconies and sides of up to 20 players each. It must have been difficult for the players to all fit on the court at once! Fortunately the number of players has now been reduced to a more manageable 5-a-side. Each side is also allowed 5 substitutes with substitutions taking place as often as their coach decides.

In 1900 the peach baskets were replaced by the now familiar iron hoops with a bottomless net. Further developments to the game aimed to make it more suitable for women players led to the eventual development of netball using a similar 'goal.'

Basketball rapidly gained international acceptance and 22 nations competed when it was introduced to the Olympics in the 1936 games in Berlin. This number has now increased to such an extent that there are qualifying tournaments held before each Olympics and only 16 countries are allowed to go forward into the competition proper. It continues to be dominated by the USA but they are facing increasing competition from Eastern European countries.

Although the sport has been played in Britain since the early days of this century, the National Basketball League was not established until 1972 and there were then only 6 teams involved. The 1982/83 season saw the league having grown to 63 men's and women's teams and organised into divisions.

Being tall is a distinct advantage for a basketball player and most of the men in the First Division teams are over six feet tall. Art Wearren of Sunderland and Mike Spaid of Hemel Hempstead are both 6'10" and Simon Baulcomb of Hemel Hempstead is a giant of 7 feet!

One effect of the very rapid growth in the popularity of the game over the last few years has been that most players in the UK are still relatively young. The game is now played in over 5,000 schools. This must surely lead to a tremendous improvement in the standards of the game here over the coming years.

Crystal Palace v Sunderland

TABLE TENNIS

It is likely that the pranks of two Cambridge University undergraduates, in 1879, led to the game which became table tennis. They hit Champagne corks across a table with the remnants of a cigar box. Later modifications may have included the use of a row of books across the centre of the table like a tennis net.

By 1899 the game had been given some rudimentary rules. A string had replaced the books and the method of serving had been established. If a player missed the ball, he conceded the point, the first to score 21 being the winner.

Early experiments also included trying out celluloid balls and the different noises which these made hitting the bat and the table gave rise to the name 'ping pong'. The game became popular with undergraduates and army officers and gradually started to spread throughout the world.

When, a few years later, a player attached a piece of rubber to his bat, he was able to play a whole range of shots and spin the ball in ways which had never previously been possible. The game of ping pong flourished so that, in 1927, the World Championships began.

Desmond Douglas

By this time the name of the game was changed. In order to avoid problems with the commercial use of the name ping pong, the governing body in England changed its name to the Table Tennis Association and later the English Table Tennis Association.

The World Championships rapidly expanded to include nations from all over the globe and the game grew in popularity everywhere. In these early years it was the Hungarians who dominated the sport but, after World War II, Asian players began to gain the upper hand – from China and Japan. In China, table tennis is the country's number 1 sport.

The modern sport demands a great deal of speed and agility from the players. This probably explains why so many of the top players reach their peak while still relatively young. Karen Witt, England's current number 1 lady player is just 21 and Carl Prean, one of the brightest prospects in English table tennis, is only 15. Both are experts in the use of the modern sandwich bats which impart great speed and spin on the ball.

Although table tennis has never reached the popularity in Britain that it has in China, or even in West Germany where it is regularly one of the most popular televised sports, table tennis remains extremely popular. The premier British event, the Norwich Union English Open Championship, attracts some of the very best players from all over the world but British players, Jill Hammersley and Desmond Douglas, have been recent winners.

WATERSKIING

In this sport the skier is towed behind a power boat and skims across the surface of the water by means of one or two flat boards attached to his feet. It seems likely that it started out as a simple piece of fun when a swimmer in Hawaii was towed home behind a fishing boat on a flat piece of board.

Mike Hazelwood

That was in the early 1900's. Since then, techniques, skills and equipment have all developed a long way and waterskiing has become highly organised and competitive. It is now a recognised Olympic sport.

The main form of tournament waterskiing can be divided into three different disciplines: slalom, tricks and jump.

In the slalom discipline the skier is towed behind a boat travelling at a set speed between two lines of buoys. The skier attempts to round as many buoys as possible while the task is made progressively more difficult by shortening the tow rope. It often proves very spectacular.

Trick skiing shows off the skills of the skier to best advantage but is perhaps the most difficult discipline for non skiers to understand. As in other "trick" sports such as diving or ice-skating there are a variety of possible difficult tricks for the skier to master and he is marked for how well he performs a sequence of them within a set time limit.

Jumping is the most spectacular element of waterskiing competition. Skiers are towed over a ramp and try to jump as far as they can before landing back on the water. By timing their approach and using their strength to maximum effect, jumpers can be moving at more than 60mph when they hit the ramp and frequently jump more than 160 feet. The current world record stands at nearly 200 feet and this magical "barrier" will surely be beaten soon.

The sport is practised all over the world but for obvious reasons it has flourished more rapidly in countries where the weather conditions are favourable. International competitions such as the KP Masters championship will include skiers from a wide variety of countries including Israel, France, Venezuela, USSR, Spain and the USA as well as Great Britain.

Despite not having the most favourable weather, Britain's waterski team is the strongest in Europe. Mike Hazelwood is one of the best known skiers in the world having been world champion in 1977 and the holder of the current men's jumping record. It is not so well known that another British skier, Kathy Hulme, is also the holder of the world jumping record for women nor that the British team are European champions at both senior and junior levels.

Mike Hazelwood